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# Research and Reference Service

OVERSEAS REACTION TO THE CUBAN SITUATION  
(As of 8:00 a.m.)

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This is a research report, not a statement of Agency policy

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### SUMMARY

A major theme of Free World editorial comment is that both the U.S. and Soviet Union should exercise caution in the Cuban situation.

Dismay is expressed in some quarters, and there appears to be a tendency to look to the UN for a solution.

The go-slow idea is strongest in Western Europe, particularly in Britain. It is also appearing in the Far East, especially in Japan, and in the Middle East.

The Soviet Union still seems to be putting out mostly sound and fury. They are building popular feeling through such devices as regional radio interviews with the "common people" -- factory workers, housewives, sailors, students, professionals, etc. There is, as yet, no indication that a policy line has been established.

Red China has attacked the U.S. position as "piracy" but makes no reference to arms being sent to Cuba by the Soviet Union. The first editorial comment from five Far East nations is about equally divided between firm support and alarm over the risks involved.

Latin American nations appear to be most enthusiastic about the action.

Two minor themes appear in the stream of world comment. Frequent reference is made to military bases around the Soviet Union. In addition, attention is called to the timing of the action preceding the U.S. Congressional elections.

## SOVIET BLOC

Moscow propaganda continues to mark time while the official line is shaping up. Consequently, Soviet output gives no hint as to how the most crucial issue, blockade, eventually will be handled.

At the moment, Moscow is most intent on trying to generate world public opposition against America's "monstrous, perfidious and aggressive" intentions. It maintains that there is still time to act sanely, and calls on all the people to help U.S. "aggressive imperialism" come to its senses. So far there apparently has been no media reaction to the presentation of our case in the UN.

Within the Soviet Union, where the full text of the President's speech is still not available publicly, propagandists are beginning to shed a little more light on his central arguments as they sharply reject them. Pravda, in the most direct indictment of the speech, editorialized that "President Kennedy's radio and TV broadcast was sheer falsehood and hypocrisy." Yet there still is no denial that Soviet weapons in Cuba lie at the heart of the issue.

In its efforts to mobilize opinion against the U.S. and its act of incipient "direct aggression" against Cuba, Moscow media tend to play up the danger against all the national liberation movements allegedly inherent in such a U.S. policy. Apparently chafing under our allusions to the Soviet emulation of Hitlerian tactics, Soviet propaganda is now trying to equate our moves with past Nazi aggressive policies.

In the meantime, Soviet "public opinion" reacted almost immediately to the release of the Soviet government statement. It is moving along predictable paths of firm support and indignation. In general though, while waiting for the issuance of the central line, Moscow propaganda is substituting vituperation and injured pride for real policy thinking. It condemns the U.S. and its "faked photos" for behaving "like a most flagrant aggressor," not because Washington is afraid of weapons in Cuba, but rather because it is frightened of the changes which have taken place in that country.

The European satellites, in the meantime, continue their support of the current Soviet line with the publication of government statements in Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia (countries most attuned to Moscow and most devoid of independent thought). Yugoslavia, while much less disposed toward the use of invective, still tends to lean toward the Soviet point of view.

## FAR EAST

Initial editorial comment now available from five Far East nations is about equally divided between firm support for the U.S. action on Cuba and dismay at the risks inherent in the U.S. stand.

A dominant note in most comment is the desire for prompt U.N. action. Both parties in the dispute are advised to avoid further provocation.

Editorial comment from Japan and Malaya is generally critical. Comment from Taiwan and South Korea endorses the U.S. action warmly. Filipino editorial opinion strikes something of a middle ground, praising the U.S. action as inevitable, but placing considerable stress on the need for U.N. intervention to forestall catastrophe.

Most Southeast Asian nations are as yet unreported. At least some of them are undoubtedly preoccupied with the neighborhood crisis on the Sino-Indian border.

Peking's official party paper People's Daily promptly assailed the U.S. action as a threat portending ultimate U.S. aggression and intervention, but there is no hint of bloc countermeasures to the U.S. quarantine. There is no reference to the Soviet Union.

Peking takes no stand on the critical issues involved. Unlike previous editorials which have been known to offer adventurist advice to Moscow, this one refrains from even mentioning Soviet involvement in Cuba. While pledging the "resolute support" of the Bloc against U.S. "piracy" and threats of aggression, the editorial concludes tamely that it will be the "Cuban people" who will smash the U.S. imperialist acts.

Editorials in all of Japan's leading papers discuss the U.S. action on Cuba in serious tones. The influential Asahi characterizes the development as "truly grave" and "extremely dangerous," promising its opinion by urging the United States to "re-examine" its measures and at the same time pinning the "primary responsibility for averting the danger" on the Soviet Union. Mainichi presents a balanced interpretation, but concludes by urging "prudence" on

the United States. Yomiuri shows some vacillation of judgment by terming the U.S. policy toward Cuba as "emotional and extravagant," but praising the President's position leaving the door open for negotiation. Most of the Japanese editorial comment calls for prompt U.N. action, and Yomiuri calls upon the leaders of the United States and the USSR to "meet without delay."

The conservative Malay Mail of Kuala Lumpur is most critical of the Administration, describing the President as "panic-stricken" and "irresponsible" in his action on Cuba. An editorial in the Malayan Times is more balanced in its appraisal, praising the courage and firmness of the President but, like the Mail, showing concern over the brinksmanship involved. Chinese-language papers in Singapore have showed understanding of the U.S. decision, but express hope for prompt U.N. efforts to prevent war.

The ringing endorsement of President Kennedy's policy by Philippine President Macapagal is reflected only in part in editorial comment from Manila. The Herald admits the risks, but argues that they must be taken to preserve the security of the free world, an argument repeated in the Daily Mirror which terms the President's decision as "the best possible move." The Bulletin and the Times, however, place the burden of their editorials on the hope for U.N. action to prevent further deterioration of the situation.

Both Taiwan and South Korea have responded favorably to the U.S. action, with Taiwan comment terming the blockade a "middle-of-the-road" approach and urging stronger U.S. action, including the use of armed force. South Korea praises U.S. resolution and notes that U.S. firmness on Cuba will make the task in Berlin easier.

## CUBA

Cuban comment charged that the "blockade is a war measure under the UN charter." Before Castro's speech, Havana's TV network hoped for at least moral support from Brazil, Chile and Mexico. In a direct appeal for support, Cuban shortwave transmitters gave essential details of President Kennedy's speech.

The U.S. action was labeled "stupidity bordering on madness" in an item picked up from the Uruguay independent Epoca.

In his long speech last night, Castro called the U.S. decision "an act of war." He denied that Cuban armaments were violation of the Rio Treaty and added "What do we care about treaties?" He also said Cuba is "always ready to negotiate with the U.S." but would never disarm as long as the U.S. maintains its hostile attitude. He added that anyone who wants to inspect Cuba "had better come ready for war."

## LATIN AMERICA

Editorial and official comment in Latin American countries continues to favor the President's strong stand.

The Brazilian War Ministry announced that the armed forces are ready to carry out the decisions of the Punta del Este meeting "because this is the position of our government, especially in the case where a foreign nation furnishes offensive weapons to a nation of the continent."

In Argentina, La Prensa of Buenos Aires said the "momentous declaration by President Kennedy casts new light on the problem . . . and faces the world with facts which no longer admit cleverness, confusion or half-baked formulas." The Buenos Aires Herald said the Naval blockade is liable to produce incidents which cannot be localized. But those who fear the consequences must consider the implications if construction were allowed to continue on the missile sites, it added. The German Freie Presse said "Finally Washington decided to speak to Moscow in the only language it understands."

Four of five papers in Lima carried the full text of the President's address. Seven Lima radio stations and one TV channel rebroadcast the speech. The reference in the speech that Lima is in rocket range of Cuba had great impact. Editorial comment in Comercio concentrated on the danger of the "immense war arsenal" in Cuba.

The dominant Chilean reaction appeared to be sober appreciation of the gravity of the situation and a feeling of the inevitability of action once the extent of the Soviet build-up was known.

## MIDDLE EAST

Comment in the Middle East was spotty and centers on the crisis nature of world affairs. Cuba is frequently linked to the China-India border dispute in generalized comments on the dangers of war.

Damascus Radio broadcast an editorial from As-Sada Al-Aam saying the Soviet freedom of action is now less than it was before the Chinese-Indian border clashes. It comments that India is keeping China committed and creating strong anxiety in the Soviet Union that the border battles might spread.

Cairo political circles call for efforts to preserve peace, according to the Middle East News Agency. They urge "liquidation of bases and work to achieve disarmament" to "drive away the specter of war."

USIS in Greece reports private reactions are most favorable to the strong U.S. stand. Newspaper comment is more reserved. The pro-government Vrathyni called the situation "critical" but not one to lead to World War. It added "Bolshevik opportunism is, as usual, ready to create a hundred Castros for nuisance effect and exploitation while ready to sell them out."

Ethnos of Athens, which opposes the government, said "Washington had tried to stir the Central and South American states against Fidel Castro through the Alliance for Progress, but its effort was not as successful as anticipated due to non-participation of most of those states in an anti-Castro front." Ethnos added that the "Soviets cannot but react to the radical American measure taken against a Moscow's protege."

The Lebanese press banner headlined the President's speech. Initial editorial comment from the pro-UAR Al-Kifah said the blockade of Cuba will fail to profit the U.S. because it will render Castro more determined to maintain his alliance with the Soviet Union. The paper was distressed, it said, that a "morally and financially powerful country like the U.S. would follow such a policy with a neighboring state." The generally pro-West An Nahar linked the crises in Cuba, Yemen and on the Indian-Chinese border. It told its readers that both the U.S. and the Soviet Union have revealed an inability to intervene in non-nuclear battles.

## AFRICA

The earliest comment from Africa came from Ghana and the Union of South Africa.

Ghana radio termed the quarantine "one of the worst in American annals." It referred to the "ill-conceived blockade" and argued that "for years now the United States has been ringing the Soviet Union with military bases." It also played the theme that the move in Cuba was made with an eye to U.S. congressional elections.

South African press comment generally supports the United States. The Pretoria News called attention to the "colossal risk" but stated "in the circumstances it would be still a greater risk to permit the Communist build-up to proceed unimpeded." The Star (Johannesburg) said: "No Western power doubts that Communist Cuba represents a strategic threat to the Western World. The only question, the paper said, is the "wisdom of strong-arm tactics to right the situation." No official comment was reported.

## WESTERN EUROPE

The British government issued a statement backing the U.S. position after a cabinet meeting. Spokesmen in France, West Germany and most other European countries allied to the U.S. also voiced support.



In London, the Times said "the evidence appears to be hard" and adds that "a way forward should be sought apart from the confrontation of strength." The Daily Telegraph said the decision has "aroused anxiety and misgivings." It adds, in commenting on comparing missile base locations, that the Cuba development is "a fresh threat." "There are limits," the Telegraph says, "as to what the West can afford to tolerate. They have already been reached." Guardian noted that President Kennedy had proposed the elimination of all arms and military bases, and said at least some good will come out of the Cuban crisis if that point is emphasized.

In Italy, Premier Fanfani told the Senate "Italy's solidarity... is assured." He expressed confidence that a solution would be found through UN channels. In Bologna, the independent liberal daily, Il Resto del Carlino, said editorially the "proof supplied by President is crushing."

The Belgian press was generally sympathetic, focusing on the offensive nature of the installations in Cuba.